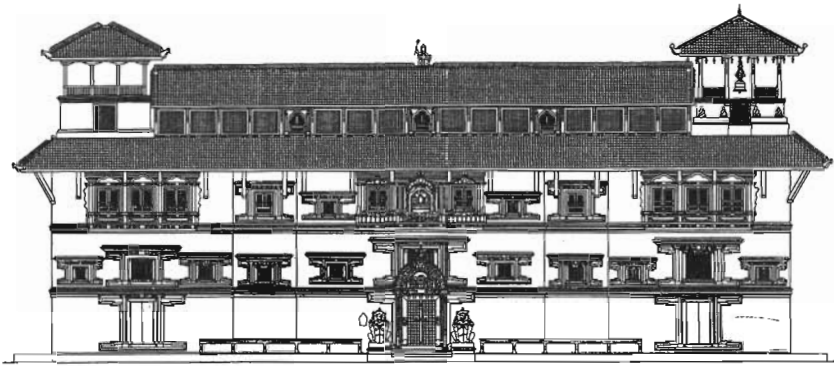




Restoration of Patan Museum

Götz Hagmüller



PRINCIPAL WEST ELEVATION

The three cities of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur, are old historic settlements of Nepal. As capitals of tiny kingdoms (governed for centuries by the same dynasty, the Mallas), these cities flourished on the competition between their kings and rich merchants, challenging their rivals with the more peaceful means of art and architecture, devoted to the many Hindu, Buddhist and local gods — though obviously also intended to outshine each other's splendour. Of course, the focus of attention in this race for religious and urban embellishment was in each case the royal palace compound of each city, the *Darbar* — the centre of urban ritual and all public functions. All three *Darbars* are world heritage sites and the Patan *Darbar*, in particular, is one of the most beautifully designed urban squares in the world.

Prof E Sekler, an eminent architectural historian from Harvard University, chose and proposed to start repairing the most damaged part of Patan *Darbar* at Keshav Narayan Chowk, the part which used to be the residential courtyard of the palace in Malla times, on behalf of an UNESCO mission in 1976. Work started in 1983 as part of bilateral cooperation efforts between Austria and Nepal, under the supervision of an experienced foreign conservation consultant and the Department of Archaeology of Nepal.

Conservation and Restoration Aspects

The conservation of the Patan Palace compound had three major physical aims: to repair all damages that the building faced and to save it from future risks of decay and destruction; to rehabilitate the historical design of the courtyard which had changed over many years — it was not used as a palace any longer; to convert the building with restoration efforts into a museum and to adapt its structure to new needs and functions.

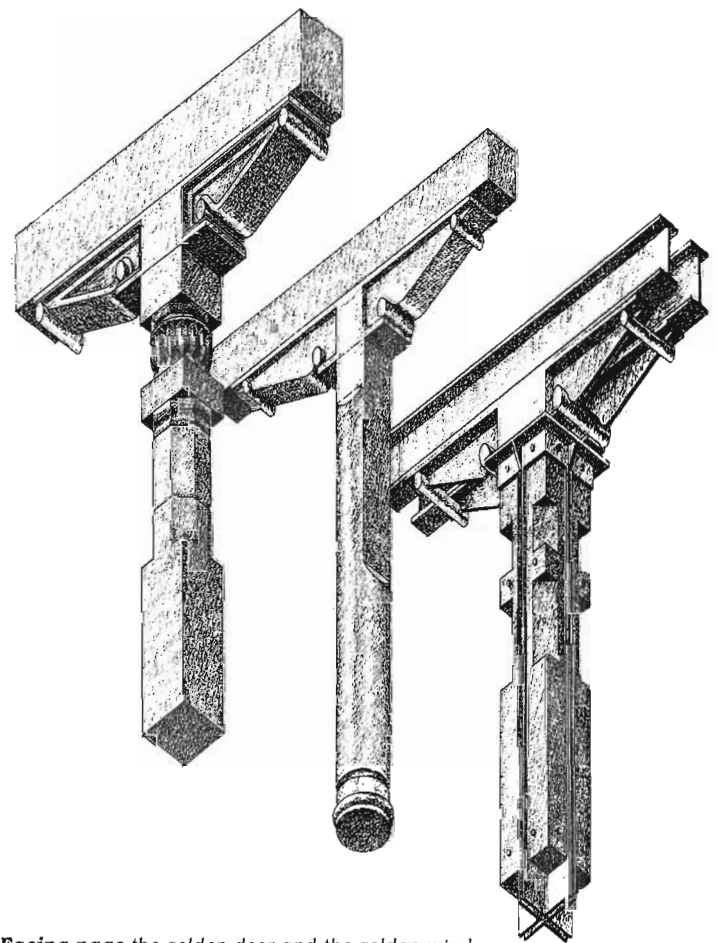
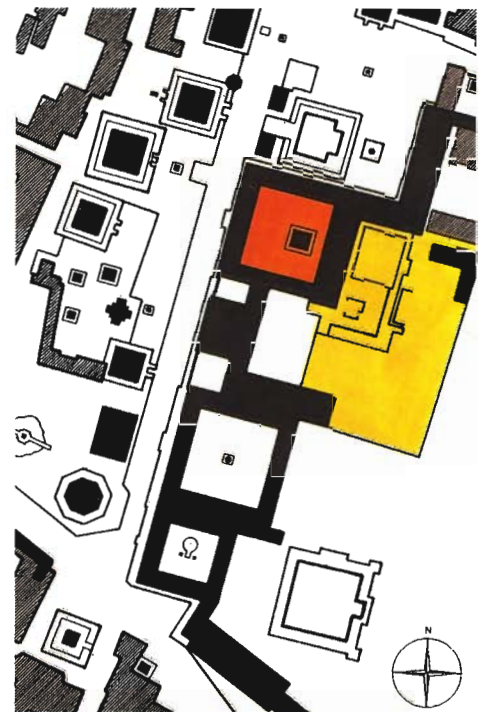
On the technical side, the major damage to historical buildings in Nepal results from water and earthquakes. Frequent and often strong earthquakes have taken their toll even in Patan *Darbar*. Ever since modern conservation techniques were introduced about 25 years ago in Nepal, it has become a standard practice to reinforce historic masonry buildings against seismic risks with the help of hidden concrete ring beams or slabs. This established practice was also followed in Patan.

The damage from water, both in the form of rain water seeping through leaking roofs and terraces or as ground moisture rising in the masonry walls, is less catastrophic but constitutes a permanent risk of deterioration for the structural materials of timber and brick. To safeguard against these destructive forces of water, appropriate modern technologies have been introduced — be it damp-proof barriers between

Patan Darbar square

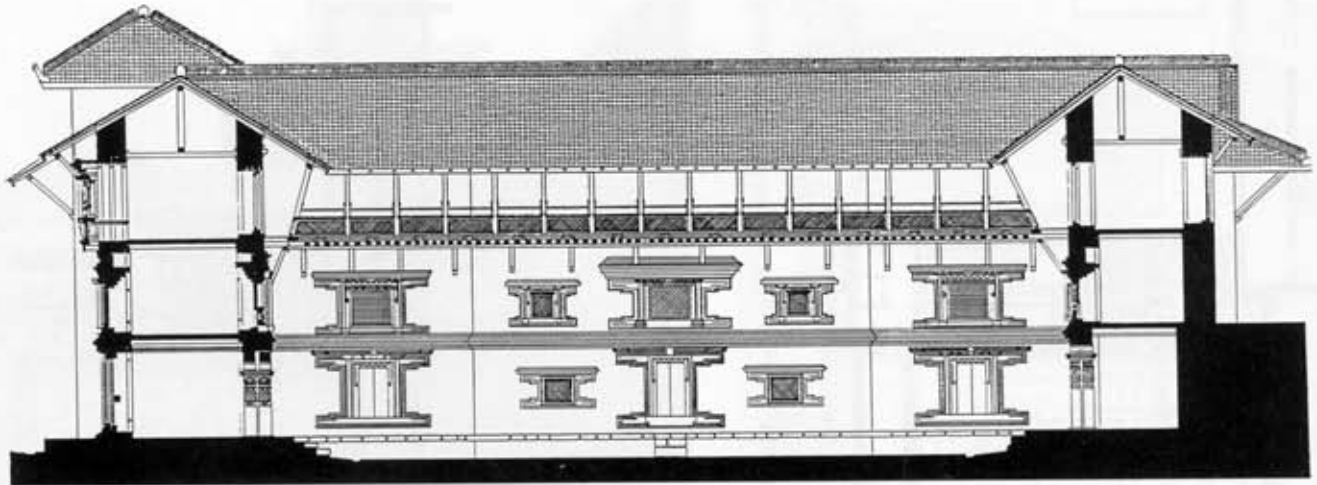
BACKYARD,
CAFETERIA, GARDENS

KESHAV NARAYAN
CHOWK

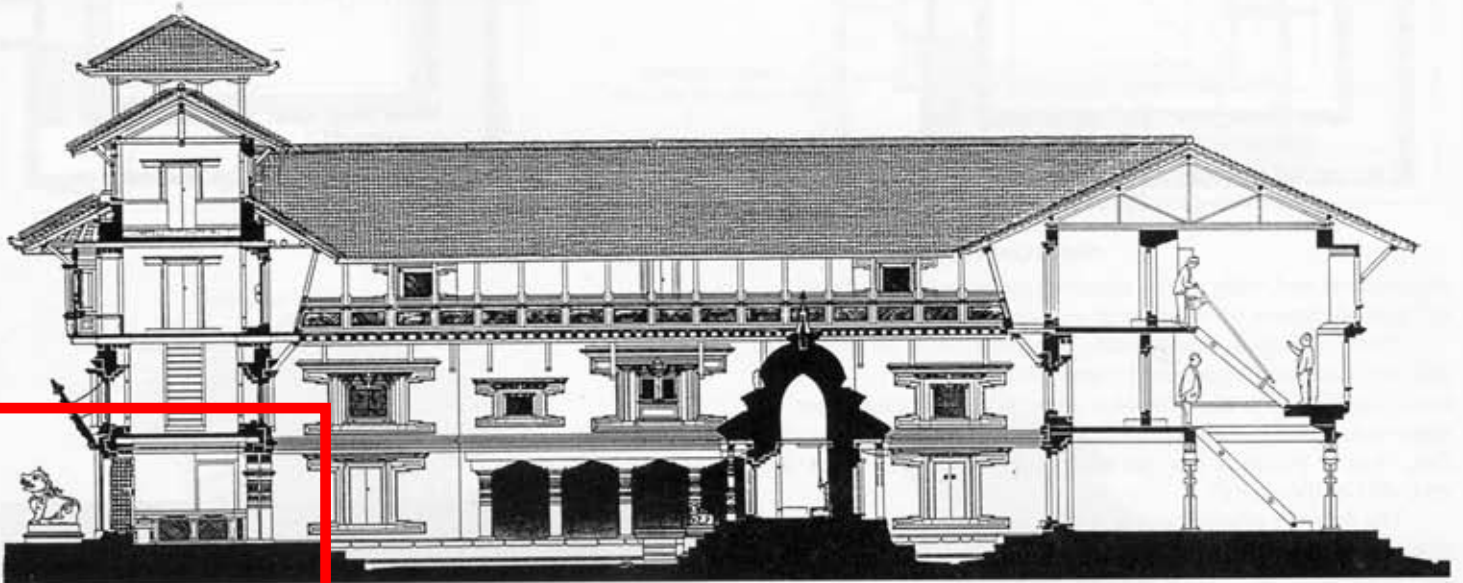


Facing page the golden door and the golden window

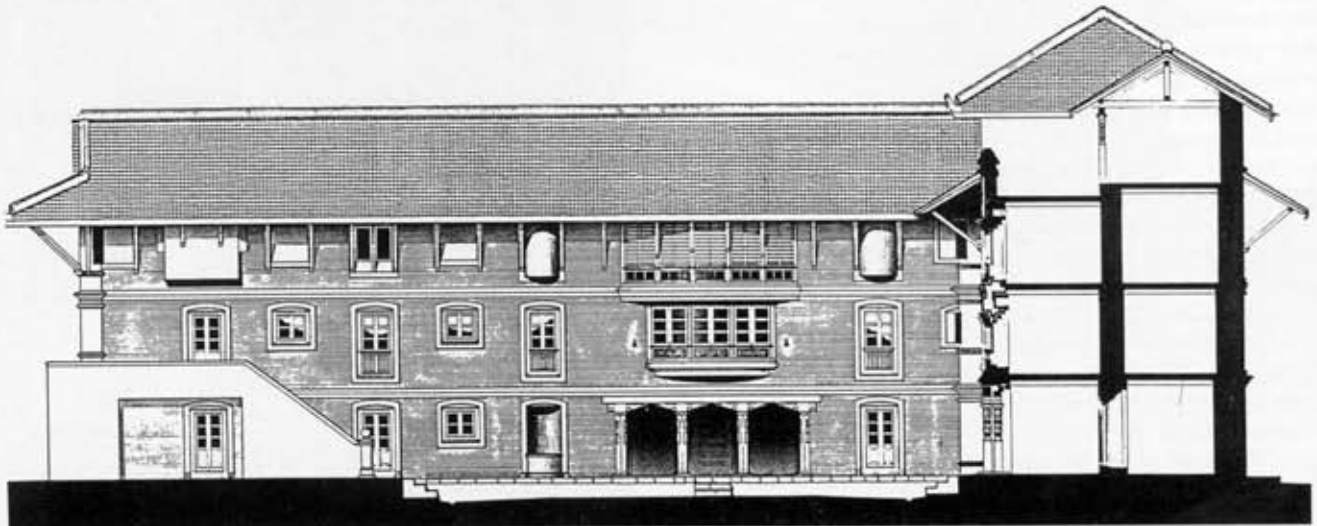
Above Typical motifs of Malla-period architecture (left) and two modern design interpretations at the Patan Museum (in timber) for the garden pavilions (centre) and in steel sections and timber for the east wing arcade (right)



COURTYARD ELEVATION: EAST WING SECTION THROUGH NORTH AND SOUTH WING



EAST-WEST SECTION THROUGH WEST WING, TEMPLE AND EAST WING



EAST ELEVATION EAST WING, SECTION THROUGH NORTH -EAST WING